Methodist Ministers
and
Churches in Astoria
with some
Contemporary Events

COMPILED BY

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In all the years of the existence of the Methodist Church in Astoria, there are probably none who have served the church as long and as faithfully as Mary and Sharon Turner, who have complied this history of Methodism in Astoria.

For many years Mr. Turner was the church treasurer, keeping his accounts conscientiously and accurately. Mrs. Turner at this time, was the communion steward. But their most constant efforts were in Sunday School work. No one knows how many of the young people of Astoria have been influenced by their sincere teachings and earnest prayers.

For almost thirty-five years, they conducted a Sunday School in a cannery building in West Astoria. In all this time they were absent only when illness prevented their attendance. Their vacations and pleasure trips were always planned so as not to interfere with the regular services of the West Astoria Sunday School.

As the young men and women of Astoria go to the four corners of the earth today, countless numbers of them will carry with them the memory of the life and teachings of Christ as exemplified in the lives of Mary and Sharon Turner.

J. W. P.

METHODIST MINISTERS AND CHURCHES IN ASTORIA WITH SOME CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

One hundred and two years ago the Rev. John H. Frost, the first Christian Minister appointed to serve directly on the Pacific coast, was sent to Astoria by Rev. Jason Lee, Superintendent of the Methodist Mission on the Willamette River, to work among the coast Indians and to open a school for them.

The year 1840, was only forty-eight years after the fortunate discovery of the Columbia River by Capt. Robert Gray in 1792, just 150 years ago on this eleventh day of May 1942.

Or thirty five years after Lewis & Clark started back to astonish President Thomas Jefferson with their account of the wonders of the west.

And it was only twenty-nine years after the ship Tonquin, Captain J. Thorne, had landed the John Jacob Astor fur traders and their outfit on the south side of the Columbia, where they made a clearing in the forest and built their warehouses, cabins and stockade and called it Fort Astor.

The northwest, known "back in the states" as "The Oregon Country," was in 1840 a remote and almost unexplored wilderness extending from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Russian settlements in Alaska to the Spanish possessions of California.

By many of the law-makers in Washington it was considered as of very doubtful value to the United States.

Besides the natives and a few groups of courageous missionaries, the only inhabitants were men engaged in trapping for furs, mostly Canadians.

The Astor Company, beset with many difficulties, including the loss of the Tonquin, was not highly successful.

In October, 1813, Duncan McDougall, Astor partner in charge of Fort Astor and a son-in-law of Chief Coboway, because of the war of 1812 and fearing the Indians, whom he had offended, sold at a sacrifice the fort and a large stock of furs to the Northwest Fur Company, which later merged with the Hudson Bay Fur Company. Capt. Black, of the British sloop of War Raccoon took possession as an act of war on December 1, 1813, and renamed it Ft. George.

Five years later Capt. Biddle of the American ship Ontario hauled down the British flag and again the stars and stripes waved over the first American settlement in the northwest.

In "Belcher's Narrative," Vol. 1, P 289, is stated: "The old Fort Astor was burned in 1818, and in 1841 the only vestige of the buildings was a bald spot. The town consisted of a cabin and a shed."

This refers, rather slightingly, to the Hudson Bay Fur Company warehouse and the home of James Birney, agent.

The Hudson Bay Company continued to handle the fur business however, and maintained its agency until 1846, using the name Ft. George.

In 1824, when Dr. John McLoughlin arrived from Montreal to assume the duties of Chief Factor, he decided, with prophetic vision, that Astoria was too far from the cross-trails of travel, and so chose the Vancouver site for his headquarters.

Until the settlers organized a provisional government in 1843 Dr. McLoughlin was the only recognized authority in the northwest country. Of him the Oregonian said on July 27, 1939:

> "Dr. McLoughlin was unofficial governor and uncrowned king of a vast region of unknown extent from Russian America to the Spanish possessions. He had supreme authority, not only in military but in civil affairs, and his rule was so wise, so firm, so just that, during all the time he was chief factor, there was never an Indian war in the Northwest."

Jason Lee and his associates established the mission on the Willamette in 1834 with the hope of Christianizing and civilizing the Indians.

Branch missions had been opened at The Dalles of the Columbia, on the Umpqua river, at the Falls of the Willamette, and on Puget Sound. As there were not enough preachers and teachers to further extend the work, the church was persuaded to send reinforcements.

In November 1839, the ship Lausanne left New York with a party of fifty one persons destined for the Lee Mission.

After a seven months voyage via Cape Horn the Lausanne arrived safely in the Columbia. In the party were seven preachers, several teachers, a physician, carpenters, blacksmiths and farmers, some with wives and children. Among the preachers was our Mr. Frost, his wife and small daughter.

Mr. Frank Spittle, in his history of the Episcopal Church in Astoria states that "The Rev. Herman Beaver, a church of England Chaplain for the Hudson Bay Fur Company at Vancouver, visited Ft. George, as Astoria was then called, on November 8, 1838, when he baptised four children and married James Birney and Charlotte Beaulieu." Mr. Birney was the Hudson Bay agent at Astoria.

It was in this home that Mr. Frost was welcomed on July 14, 1840, and here his first service was held, attended by the family and a few fur trappers.

Supplied by Mr. Birney with Indian guides and a canoe Mr. Frost set out to explore his field of endeavor and to select a location for his mission school. He found the largest Indian settlement near the coast, south of Point Adams. Many of them lived in low houses made of split lumber, with dirt floors. One such abode is said to have accommodated 30 families.

Mr. Frost decided that the mission should be in this vicinity, and chose for its site a clear spot of level land on the west side of what we now call Smith's Lake.

Returning by the tedious method of canoe travel to the Lee Mission, Mr. Frost obtained an assistant in the person of Rev. W. H. Kone.

The necessary provisions and equipment for the new venture were loaded in two skiffs, and the two reverend but amateur boatmen started on the uncertain voyage to Astoria.

At the mouth of the Willamette, as they were entering the Columbia some rough water was encountered which upset one of the skiffs, spilling out most of the contents, including their stove, which was not recovered.

By strenuous effort the goods were finally carried to destination. In erecting their cabins the preachers were assisted by Solomon H. Smith, the first white settler at Clatsop. Mr. Smith had taught school for Dr. McLoughlin at Vancouver, and also in the Willamette valley. One of his pupils was "Celiaste," daughter of Chief Coboway. She became Mrs. Smith, and was a very comely and intelligent woman. The Smiths were of great assistance to the Missionaries. A son, Silas B. Smith, became a lawyer. Two of his children now reside in Warrenton.

Mr. Frost brought his wife and young daughter to their new home and the missionaries entered upon the difficult and dangerous work of their assignment.

With no method of travel but by canoe and trail, none of the comforts or conveniences of civilization, and seldom seeing other white people, they earnestly endeavored to bring the truths of Christianity to the uncultured intellects of the tribes people.

They worked up and down the Columbia on both sides of the river, and along the coast, trying to reach as many of the natives as possible.

When Mr. Birney warned Mr. Frost of the dangers of his calling, he stated that he would consider himself immortal until his work was done. Mrs. Frost stated that many of the Indians accepted the teachings of Christianity and observed the commandments, as long as the missionaries were with them.

The strenuous life was too much for Mr. Frost. He was forced to retire and soon after passed away.

Mr. Kone also retired from the field.

Our next minister was Rev. Josiah L. Parrish, also a Lausanne passenger, who came to "Astoria and Clatsop" in 1844.

Mr. Parrish was prominent in early Oregon affairs. He was one of the immortal 53 American voters at Champoeg.

It was on the petition of Mr. Parrish that the county of Clatsop was set apart in 1844.

Mr. Parrish served for a number of years as government agent for all the coast Indians.

He became a noted circuit rider, and for many years was affectionately known over Oregon as Brother Parrish.

About the year 1845 the Clatsop mission was sold to W. H. Gray, who had been connected with the Whitman and the Lee Mission. Mr. Gray was a Presbyterian and conducted it as a Presbyterian school.

Mr Gray and Solomon Smith helped to build the Presbyterian Church on Clatsop Plains in 1846, the first Presbyterian church west of the Rocky Mountains. The present Gray Memorial church on the same site was built in his honor by his daughter, Mrs. Jacob Kamm.

The sites of the Clatsop Mission and the Smith homestead adjoining are still marked by beautiful ornamental trees planted by the pioneers, and are frequently visited by people interested in early church history.

By the year 1843 there was felt a growing need by the few Oregon settlers, the people connected with the missions and the American trappers, for a civil government with authority to handle the affairs of state which naturally began asserting themselves.

The Hudson Bay Fur Company of course opposed such a move, hoping to preserve the Oregon country for the fur business, and as a British possession.

When the inevitable culminated in the memorable division at Champoeg in the spring of 1843 those favoring adherence to the United States and the organization of a government on the American plan carried the day.

The fifty Hudson Bay objectors withdrew from the meeting and the 53 loyal Americans proceeded at once to plan what proved to be one of the most unique events in history. Remote and almost isolated from the United States the Oregonians perfected for themselves and successfully carried on for four years a provisional government without parallel.

The long disputed boundry question between the United States and Britain possessions having been settled in 1846, the congress, spurred by President Polk, was finally induced to recognize the importance of the Oregon country and in 1848 admitted to the union the territory of Oregon, a country four times as large as all the New England states, embracing our present Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

Referring to the admission of Oregon territory the Hon. Binger Herman, Commissioner of the General Land Office wrote in 1898:

"This was the first real recognition by the nation of the most unique and successful attempt at self government in history. Separated by a continental wilderness from the seat of government, the Oregon pioneers had by mutual consent carried on a well organized government, enacted laws, kept order, imposed taxes, fought as well as taught the Indians, supplying a lofty illustration of the capacity of the American people for self government."

The provisional government had divided the Oregon country into six counties most of which were large enough for states.

At one time Lane County extended from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Clatsop County was more than twice its present size.

The people connected with the Lee Mission and other missions as well, because of their especial fitness by education and patriotic motives, and because of the class of settlers they attracted to the country, had a most important influence in the formation of the new state.

These factors account in large measure for the well known high standard of culture and character of the early Oregon pioneers, from whom have come many men and women prominent in U. S. History.

Of the fifty Champoeg voters who favored American rule, fourteen were classed by Historian George H. Himes as being Methodists. Seven of them were Ministers. A number of other voters had come to Oregon through the influence of the Missionaries.

George Abernathy, who came on the Lausanne, and had been treasurer of the Mission, was elected Governor and served with distinction during the four years of the Provisional government.

A. E. Wilson, appointed to be judge, was connected with the Mission.
Dr. W. H. Wilson, Treasurer, was a missionary.

Joseph L. Meek, Sheriff, was a Rocky Mountain trapper who was converted at the Mission and joined the Methodist Church.

Many of the sessions of the governing body were held in the mission buildings near Salem, and in the Methodist Church in Oregon City, the first Protestant Church west of the Rocky Mountains, dedicated in 1843.

Astoria's fourth Methodist preacher, was Rev. Chauncey O. Hosford. Mr. Hosford was converted at the Lee Mission in 1847 and soon was licensed to preach. He went to San Francisco and while preaching there started a movement which resulted in the formation of the first Methodist Church of San Francisco.

In 1850 Mr. Hosford was sent to "Astoria and Clatsop" by William Roberts, who presided over the first sessions of the Oregon conference.

Mr. Hosford's parish included Clatsop Plains and Astoria, but centered mostly at Lexington, contiguous to Skipanon Landing, now known as the old John Wirt place.

In 1851 Mr. Hosford taught school and held religious services in a building owned by Conrad Boelling at Eighth and Bond streets. This has been called the First Church in Astoria. The school had only ten pupils. Mr. Boelling paid the preacher $20.00 per month and other patrons paid another $20.00, for teaching the school.

Mr. Hosford was a minister in Oregon for many years, one of the famed old Circuit riders.

Rev. George M. Berry succeeded Mr. Hosford in 1853.

There were at this time 21 members, 13 probationers and two local preachers in the Church.

Belcher Narrative states that "J. M. Shively, John McClure, H. E. Wilson, John Adair, a Mr. Smith at Smith's Point, Robert Shortess, and James Birney were the only settlers in Astoria in 1844." There were probably some others in the suburbs.

When Astoria began to feel the pulse of life in the late 40's there was a sharp rivalry between the little settlements on the land claims of Col. John McClure, J. M. Shively and Gen. John Adair for supremacy. Each platted a townsite.

Mr. Shively had the doubtful advantage of the old fur station on his plat, and took the lead when in 1847 he was appointed to be the first post master. The first post office west of the Rockies, as the Shively home was called, was long a familiar landmark, on the east side of Fifteenth street between Exchange and Franklin.

General Adair came next in 1849 with an appointment as Collector of Customs, and in 1850 he built a small custom house near the foot of 34th street.

Mariners who had business with the Collector had to call at his port of Upper Astoria by water or go by trail around Scow Bay, as there were no streets.

But John McClure had the business part of town. There were two stores on this claim in 1848, one near the foot of Ninth street in the Shark house, built by survivors of the Shark, wrecked on the bar in 1847.

The other was kept by David Ingalls at his home on the southwest corner of Tenth and Duane streets, now occupied by the Troy Laundry. McClure's home was on the Southeast corner of Eleventh and Exchange streets.

Outside of these points and below 14th street there was a considerable bay with unobstructed navigation at high tide, a favorite mooring for canoes and other small craft when Indians and trappers visited Ft. George.

McClure's triumph came when in 1854 an election in which McClure's Astoria received 95 votes gave him the permanent county seat.

Temporary county seat had been at Lexington where the first County Court was held in 1850 with W. H. Gray as Judge; David Ingalls, commissioner; and R. S. McEwan as clerk.

In the following few years the court was held in Astoria in the homes of John McClure, Dr. J. L. Trenchard, T. S. McKean and Conrad Boelling.

The first Court House was built by David Ingalls in 1855 on the south side of Court House Block.

The population of Clatsop County in 1853 was 593. Astoria is credited with 140 in 1848 and 250 in 1850.

Municipal organization was effected in Astoria in 1856, with a board consisting of James Welch, W. W. Parker, James Taylor, Conrad Boelling, and Dr. J. L. Trenchard as President.

Robert Shortess, another Champoeg voter, and a Methodist, took a claim just east of Adairs Astoria, on which Alderbrook was later platted.

Mr. Shortess led the agitation for the removal of the Hudson Bay Fur Company from Astoria. He later served as County Judge.

The first house of worship erected by the Methodist Church was built on the Northwest corner of Fifteenth street and Franklin avenue, on Lot No. 12 of Block No. 115, J. M. Shively's Astoria.

On April 23, 1853, James Welch gave bond for a deed to this lot, to be executed when Mr. Shively received a patent for his claim from the Government, with the condition that a church not less than 20x30 feet in size should be built on the lot within six months.

The deed was duly delivered on June 8, 1854, signed by J. M. Shively, conveying title to Trustees Joseph Jeffries, Jason Braman, David Ingalls, Charles Royal and W. M. Forbes.

The deed was witnessed by Rev. F. Farnsworth, who was pastor of the Church in 1854.

The building was 26x40 feet in size, cost $1600.00, and was dedicated free of debt.

Mrs. Sarah F. Woods stated in the Morning Astorian of July 22, 1926, that her father, James Welch, donated the lot for the church. Also that he built the first frame house in Astoria, and that theirs was the first white family to settle in Astoria, in 1846.

The Welch home was on the southwest corner of Fifteenth and Franklin, now the site of the Harry Flavel residence. It was built of split lumber on a frame of hemlock poles with hand made shingles on the roof, the prevailing style of construction at that time.

In the same paper, Judge J. Q. A. Bowlby stated that the church was a square building with a cupola, and that it was standing until after the year 1868.

The church was in the same block as the military barracks, and was one block south of the location of the old Fort Astor.

In 1855 Rev. W. J. Franklin was appointed to be pastor in Astoria. Mr. Franklin was chaplain to Seamen for the ports of Portland and Astoria in 1863 and it is believed that he remained as pastor for a number of years, as he was a long resident of Astoria, but the records of this period are not available.

When School District No. 1 was organized in 1854, the first school was held in the Methodist Church, probably until the district built its first school house at Ninth and Exchange streets in 1859.

The church was often used for social and civic gatherings and by other denominations, as notably Rev. Thos. Fielding Scott, First Episcopal Bishop of the Northwest held a Sunday service there in 1863.

In 1864-6 Rev. T. A. Hyland and Mrs. Hyland conducted a private school in the Methodist Church with from 20 to 30 pupils, who paid $7.00 per quarter tuition.

It was the custom in those days for the Presiding Elder of the District to visit each church every three months and to hold services.

Among the presiding Elders in this district were the Rev. Gustavus Hines, a noted pioneer preacher, and Rev. J. F. Devore. Astoria was in the Puget Sound district during the latter's term.

Dr. Devore was a very strong man. When preparing to build a church at Steilacoom on Puget Sound a saw mill owner offered to donate as much lumber as the Preacher could carry away in one day. The mill man was much surprised when Mr. Devore dragged the lumber down to the water and rafted it, and when the day was over there was enough lumber in the raft with which to build the church.

Astoria was not returned to the Portland District until 1873, when Rev. William Roberts was presiding Elder. Meanwhile many other churches were found necessary to meet the needs of the growing and diverse population of Astoria.

Grace Episcopal Church was established by Rev. T. A. Hyland, its first pastor, September 4, 1864. Services were held in the court house during the first two years. The first building was erected in 1866 on Commercial street at the location now occupied by the Astoria Abstract Company.

The present edifice was built in 1866.

The old church was a popular meeting place for civic organizations until it was demolished to make way for the Spexarth Building in 1910.

The Congregational Church was organized in 1866. The building, on the southwest corner of Tenth and Exchange streets was erected in 1868. This church remodeled, is now used by the Salvation Army.

St. Mary's Star of the Sea was organized 1857. The first building was erected 1867, and was dedicated by Arch Bishop Blanchet in 1874. The present church was built in 1902.

The Baptist Church was organized in 1878, and its first building constructed on Exchange street near Twelfth in 1879. The present building dates from 1923.

The Presbyterian Church was organized in 1877, by members mostly from the Church on Clatsop Plains.

Their first edifice was built in 1882 on the east side of Ninth street between Duane and Exchange. It was destroyed by the fire of 1922. The present building was erected in 1903, and the annex in 1936.

These include only the down town churches. The Norwegian-Danish Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1882. The building was at Thirty-seventh and Duane.

This church was merged with First Church in 1932.

There are now some 20 church organizations in Astoria.

At the September 1877 conference, Astoria pastor T. Elliott reported that the church had 20 members and had given $495.00 to benevolences that year.

In 1878 the church aspired to a new building and as a preliminary underwent a reorganization, which was accomplished in the office of Robb & Fulton, the latter being the late Senator Charles W. Fulton.

The trustees elected were: J. W. Robb, chairman; W. D. Hare, then collector of customs; Attorney J. Q. A. Bowlby, F. B. Elberson, and J. D. Curtis, who was a local preacher.

In September 1878 Rev. John T. Wolfe "was appointed to be pastor of the Methodist and Congregational Churches." Services were held in the Congregational building.

Mr. Wolfe served one year and recorded the names of 37 members and 13 received on probation. The salary was $1,000.00. Mr. Wolfe served as conference secretary from 1875 to 1887.

Among the members of the church in 1879, 1880 and 1881 were Elisah C. and Sarah Jeffers, George W. and Alice Rucker, R. B. and Belle Freeland, Mrs. Nancy Nowlen, Maxwell and Elizabeth Young, J. W. and Josephine Robb, F. C. Reed, John D. Merryman, J. Q. A. Bowlby, Dr. August C. and Jane Kinney, Addison Jewett, J. W. and Mrs. Conn, Laura A. Montgomery, and Rev. W. J. Franklin, who had been pastor in earlier years.

Prefacing a new church building project let us dispose of the old church lot at 15th and Franklin. It was probably the perfect title that on October 3, 1877, the heirs of James Welch executed a deed to Trustees J. W. Robb, W. D. Hare, J. Q. A. Bowlby and S. B. Manning, conveying the church lot. This deed was signed by Jas. W. Welch, Bertha A. Welch, John W. Welch, Agnes M. Welch, Nancy Welch, Daniel H. Welch, and Mary I. Welch, widow of James Welch.

Witnesses to signatures were I. N. Dolph and Joseph Simon, later U. S. Senators; George A. McBride, later Justice of the Supreme Court; George Merrill, R. R. Spedden and Hayden Gearhart. Evidently that was court day in Astoria.

On October 15, 1877, the church deeded to Jas. M. Welch all of the church lot "except 71¼ feet off the south end," evidently the part the old church had occupied, and on September 15, 1880, the then Trustees Augustus C. Kinney, F. B. Elberson, B. B. Franklin, J. D. Merryman, J. W. Robb and Charles Ward deeded to Josephine M. Robb the south 71¼ feet of the lot for a named consideration of $1,000.00. This deed was witnessed by W. E. Dement and J. O. Bozorth.

On the same day the trustees received a deed from J. W. and Josephine M. Robb to lot No. 2 in Block No. 64 in McClures Astoria, consideration $500.00, as a site for a new church.

In September 1879 Rev. John Parsons, an energetic young man, was assigned to Astoria.

Pastor and people were now ready to join in the work of providing the long needed church home, to be located on the lot purchased from J. W. Robb, which is the site of the present Safeway Building on Duane street, near Eleventh.

The new church was built and dedicated in 1881. It was 34x80 feet in size, had a steep roof and vaulted ceiling, stained glass windows and a handsome belfry containing the bell in the present church.

The entrance was in the Duane street end. There was a class room on each side of the vestibule, with a gallery overhead.

The pulpit was in the south end, with altar rail in front, and the choir in an alcove behind the pulpit.

Three class rooms were built in the rear in 1889.

The church was lighted with gas from a large glass chandelier hanging in the center.

There was a hot air furnace in the basement, in which an extra high tide sometimes extinguished the fire.

Like all down-town Astoria the church was built on piling. The mud flats were bare at low tide. High water was about six feet deep under the church.

For the church anniversary of March 17, 1935, Dr. Parsons wrote from Portland:

> "Fifty five years ago I was sent to Astoria by Bishop Gilbert Haven. I was there three years, the time limit in those days. I was 25 years old then. Now I am 80. During my pastorate the second church of our denomination was built, and at the time we had no better building in Oregon outside of Portland and Salem.
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> J. W. Robb was Chairman of the official board 55 years ago; he was a lawyer, senior member of the great law firm of Robb & Fulton. He had a genius for religion and a passion for music, an unusual combination.
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> In the practice of his profession he won a case, and the loser walked into his office and killed him. It was a sad blow to our little church. This was before the new church was built, and the murder trial was conducted in the church where Mr. Robb worshipped.
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> The murderer received the sentence of guilty, as he stood near the place where Mr. Robb received the sacrament.
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> This was the most tragic event in my experience as a minister of the gospel."

The church referred to was probably the Congregational.

Dr. Parsons went to his reward in 1895 after 58 years' service in the ministry, a career of much accomplishment.

Mrs. Parsons followed her husband in the same year.

In 1882 Rev. Johnston McCormac, a Methodist local preacher, came to Astoria under appointment by the American Seamans Society as Chaplain to sailors and fishermen.

Mr. McCormac was an industrious worker on ship board, on the docks and net racks, and in fishermen's homes and bunk-houses.

In those years when wheat, coal, lumber, and other commodities all went by sailing vessel there were always a number of ships in the harbor or at the Astoria wharves.

Assisted by church people Mr. McCormac held many services on the decks of vessels, especially on Sunday afternoons, when the attendance ranged from 40 to 100. He became very popular during the 25 years of his service and so had many weddings and funerals. Mr. McCormac estimated that he distributed over one million tracts, in thirteen different languages. His ability to converse in four languages was a great advantage in his work.

One of Mr. McCormac's last acts was the rescue of a young man whom he found lying handcuffed on board a vessel. The notorious Paddy Lynch, sailor boarding-house operator, received a sentence of ten years in the penitentiary for having shanghaied the man.

This event aroused the public to action which soon ended lawlessness on the waterfront.

Rev. W. T. Chapman came as pastor in October 1882 for one year.

In 1883 the veteran William Roberts, in the twilight of a long and useful life was appointed to the Astoria church. Mr. Roberts entered the ministry in Philadelphia in 1834. He succeeded Jason Lee as Superintendent of the Oregon missions in 1847, and was acting bishop, presiding over the first four sessions of the conference from 1849 to 1852. He was one of Oregon's strong men and the leading organizer of the church in the northwest.

He died in 1888, ending 54 years in the ministry.

Of Mr. Roberts, Harvey Scott said in the Oregonian of August 24, 1888:

> "William Roberts, who lived and labored 41 years in Oregon, was conspicuous among those who laid here in moral and educational and religious work the foundation of a state. Of the men and women who did this few are left. Yet a little time and they will be only a memory.
>
> "But that memory is written in results that will endure."

In 1884 Wm. Roberts received into the church Mrs. Mary H. Elmore, a woman of unusual education and ability, who was a leading member for thirty five years.

Rev. A. J. Joslyn occupied the Astoria pulpit from September 1885 to September 1886.

Mr. Joslyn received in membership Mrs. Ellen T. Hare. Mrs. Hare was born in 1810 and passed away in Astoria in 1915 at the age of 105 years. She was a striking example of Christian faith and fortitude, and though an invalid for several years before her death, by her lively interest in others, her wise counsel and cheerful disposition, was an inspiration to her many callers.

Mr. Joslyn also received young Miss Almyra Hawthorne, later Mrs. J. E. Ferguson, who for many years was a devoted Sunday School teacher, Superintendent and leading official member.

Mrs. Ferguson, now resident of Hood River, is still prominent in church, educational and civic affairs.

Rev. O. B. Whitemore began a two year's pastorate in September 1886.

In 1888 George W. Grannis was the new pastor, serving 3 years. Mr. Grannis always wore a GAR button, was a strong preacher and popular among the men.

In January 1891 he received into membership young Mary Powell, now Mrs. S. C. Turner, who has been in the church longer than any other present member.

A close second is Alexander Bremner, who joined in February of the same year. Mr. Bremner is the oldest member in point of age.

On April 3, 1889 incorporation was effected under the name "First Methodist Episcopal Church of Astoria" by Trustees L. H. Pederson, Chas. E. Hooper, John Abercrombie, John Montgomery, and Samuel Elmore.

Rev. George A. Landen began a 2 year's pastorate in the fall of 1891. He now lives in Riverside, California. He is 88 years of age.

In 1893 Rev. J. W. Bushong, D. D. was assigned to Astoria, and remained 2 years. The salary was at that time $1,000.00 per year.

Dr. Bushong, an elderly man, had been a noted lecturer and reformer. He fought the vices for which Astoria was notorious. At one time during a crusade he invited the saloon-keepers of the city to attend a church service and defend themselves. The church was packed. Several saloon men spoke in defense of their business and characters. The audience appears not to be convinced by their claims to be model citizens and philanthropists.

To secure funds with which to repay $1,000.00 borrowed from the Church Extension Society in 1881, and other debts, the church had borrowed from the Astoria Building and Loan Association $2,400.00, and later another $1,200.00. Interest at the rate of 9% for five years was deducted in advance. This reckless financing brought on a critical situation. The menace of increasing debt called for heroic action. In 1894 Dr. Bushong and the board formed the "Methodist Real Estate Concern, Incorporated by Mrs. Mary H. Elmore, Mrs. M. J. Fox, L. H. Pederson, John Abercrombie and A. R. Cyrus." The church property was deeded to the new corporation. Thirty six shares of stock of a par value of $100.00 each

were issued to subscribers, who paid for them in monthly installments. The shares were finally donated to the church and the real estate concern dissolved, with the money so raised and another loan of $1,000.00 from the Church Extension Society the Building and Loan debt was satisfied in 1897.

The church extension society loan was paid in 1902.

In 1895 Rev. J. J. Walter was sent to Astoria, serving two years. The Walter family occupied a parsonage at the northwest corner of Seventh and Duane streets, at a rental of $15.00 per month. The salary was $1,000.00. Mr. Walter was a jolly portly person and a great entertainer. On especial occasions wore a high silk hat, the only one in evidence.

Mr. Walter, assisted by Rev. O. E. Petterson, a Finnish speaking minister, organized the West Astoria M.E. Sunday school in a building furnished by Mr. Samuel Elmore on West Bond street, in 1895. During the 35 years of its existence many of the church workers taught in this school, which was well attended by the children of the west end.

The Elmore building, which came to be known as Elmore Chapel, was used for many church services and funerals. It was destroyed by fire in 1931. The school discontinued a few months later for lack of suitable housing.

Rev. W. B. Hollingshead became Methodist pastor in 1897, for two years. Mr. Hollingshead was for many years statistical secretary for the Church in Washington, D. C., and now resides in Santa Monica, California. He served 50 years in the ministry.

In 1899 Rev. Isaac Peart arrived, to serve one year.

The rented parsonage was now a comfortable dwelling at the northeast corner of Ninth and Exchange streets, where the new Assembly of God Church now stands.

Rev. B. F. Rowland came for one year in 1900, and Rev. Harold Oberg for two years in 1901.

Rev. W. S. Grim remained three years from 1903.

In 1905 the church building was remodeled by the addition of a large Epworth League room next to the street, and a high corner tower surmounted by the old belfry, providing a new entrance, with vestibule and hall. The work was done by Architect J. E. Ferguson at a cost of about $2,600.00.

Rev. C. C. Rarick, appointed in 1906, served four years, the longest pastorate to date. He came direct to Astoria from Kansas. The salary was raised to $1200.00. Mr. Rarick was a hard working evangelist. Many were added to the church during his pastorate. Mr. Rarick served as conference secretary from 1909 to 1917. He now lives at Newberg, retired after 48 years service.

In 1909 Mrs. Mary Jane Fox, an old time class leader in the church passed away at the age 83.

The beautiful art window in the present church was placed to her memory by her son, John Fox, once collector of customs in Astoria.

Lester C. Poor became pastor in 1910 for one year. He is retired and lives in Portland.

In 1911 H. J. Van Fossen came for two years.

The church now purchased its first parsonage, at 527 Grand Ave., from P. J. Brix for $3,600.00, Mr. Brix donating one-half of the price. Use of this property was discontinued in 1934.

The church also purchased in 1912 the two lots on which the present church building stands, from J. E. Ferguson and A. M. Smith for $4650.00. Mr. Van Fossen was a minister for 42 years and died in 1919.

The longest pastorate was that of W. S. Gordon, who was assigned to Astoria in September 1913 and served five years. His popularity is attested also by the fact that he performed 96 marriage ceremonies and preached 83 funeral sermons.

In preparation for another new building the Duane street Church was sold in 1916 to A. J. C. Schroeder and Albert Johnson and housed the Acme Grocery Store until it was destroyed by the big fire in 1922.

During the 35 years of its service the Old Church witnessed many good sermons, class meetings, prayer meetings, and revival services; although often in financial difficulties the Church was a good investment in the lives of thousands of people.

Mr. Gordon's principal achievement was the present house of worship, construction of which was begun as soon as the old church property was sold in 1916.

Whitehouse & Fouilhoux of Portland were the architects. The Astoria Construction Company, J. L. Burgess, President, had the contract.

Prof. J. G. Imel was Chairman of the building committee, with P. J. Brix, G. C. Pauling, Mrs. M. H. Elmore, S. C. Turner and the pastor, Rev. W. Gordon.

The cornerstone was laid on October 28, 1916, with impressive ceremonies conducted by Dr. W. W. Youngson and Mr. Gordon, with Mayor Fred Johnson, Rev. W. S. Gilbert and others participating.

The church edifice, with all its furnishings complete representing a value of about $42,000.00, was dedicated by Bishop Mathew Simpson Hughes on March 25, 1917, entirely free of debt.

The enterprise was remarkable for the harmony of the effort, the ease of acquiring the necessary funds, the fortunate choice of the plans adopted, and the satisfactory value obtained from the expenditure.

Large credit must be accorded to Mrs. Mary H. Elmore, who gave more than one fourth of the total cost and whose sound judgment prevailed in the planning.

Mrs. Elmore gave the pipe organ and the pulpit set in memory of her husband, Samuel Elmore, who was killed in an auto accident in California in 1909. Mr. Elmore had long been a trustee and strong supporter of the church.

Mr. P. J. Brix was the other large donor who with Mrs. Elmore made the new church possible.

Mr. G. C. Pauling, as secretary, was the executive for the church during construction.

The salary was raised to $1,500.00 during Mr. Gordon's term. He is now retired and living in Portland after 40 years in the ministry in Oregon.

In 1918 Rev. A. A. Heist entered on a three year pastorate, the salary rising with war costs, to $1,800.00 per year.

1921 brought M. T. Wire for a four year pastorate.

On December 8, 1922, the big fire which destroyed nearly all downtown Astoria came near taking the Methodist Church also only the fact that it was built of brick, and the heroic work of Fritz Johanson and Mr. Wire saved the building from destruction. Mr. Johanson and Mr. Wire climbed to the roof with a small hose and played water on the blistering wood cornice and the roof, preventing the flames from getting a start. Mr. Wire is now Pastor in Roseburg; he has served 40 years in the Oregon conference.

Rev. Mark Pike came in 1925. After two and one-half years he exchanged with Rev. D. D. Edwards for a California church.

Mr. Edwards invited the 78th session of the annual conference to Astoria. Previous sessions of the conference had been held in the fall, but in 1930 and since they have been held in June. The session held in our church was presided over by Bishop H. Lester Smith. It was well attended, and the ministers and their wives were well entertained.

Mr. Edwards later withdrew from the ministry and now lives in Portland.

Rev. C. I. Andrews was the unfortunate pastor of the depression, 1931 to 1933. Reduced incomes reacted to scanty salary for the preachers. Still worse he suffered bereavement in the death of Mrs. Andrews. No other death in a pastor's family is recorded. Mr. Andrews is now retired and living in California.

From 1934 to 1938 the pulpit was served by Rev. Major P. M. Blenkinsop, the singing pastor. No man is better known on the coast for his wonderful voice, ability as an entertainer, and his generosity in helping when and wherever needed, than is Mr. Blenkinsop.

Under Reverend Blenkinsop pastorate several improvements were made in the church. The auditorium was beautifully decorated and the kitchen was renovated and modernized. The mortgage on the old parsonage was paid off too. This was a debt of honor for the parsonage had been lost to the county because of the accumulation of unpaid taxes.

As chaplain in our armed forces Major Blenkinsop is a great favorite with the boys, to whom he is very devoted.

Refusing a safe position at home, he recently underwent an operation to fit himself physically to go to the front to be with the many young men he has faithfully chaperoned during their trying months of preparation.

Rev. H. F. Pemberton served one year as pastor from June 1938.

During Rev. Pemberton's pastorate the G.F. club was responsible for furnishing the church with two hundred new Methodist hymnals.

Our present pastor, Rev. Roy A. Fedje, received the Astoria appointment in June 1939, coming from Hood River.

Mr. Fedje has won a large friendship in Astoria by his effective leadership in the church, and his keen and sympathetic interest in the needs of his people and the city.

During his ministry, the choir loft has been enlarged.

The parsonage problem has at last been solved, since Mr. Fedje arranged for the purchase by the church of the residence property at No. 281 Grand Avenue, which has been improved and is an ideal home for the pastor and family, and the cost is provided for.

A popular and effective leader in the modern youth movement in the church, Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Fedje coinceived the idea of a more appropriate room for the use of young people.

This has culminated in the dedication on Sunday, April 12, 1942, by Bishop Bruce R. Baxter of "Christ Chapel," an attractive newly finished little Sanctuary on the gallery floor of the church school section.

Christ Chapel seats seventy people, and is complete with old Colonial style furnishing and equipment of a chancel, with pulpit, lectern and memorial altar fixtures.

That the chapel is popular would seem to be proved by the weddings and a Baptismal service already held there.

The church building has been repainted outside and inside and the Education Temple rearranged and decorated and new platform and altar built.

The pews in this Chapel are from the former Norwegian Danish Methodist Church of Astoria. The pulpit is from the old First Methodist Church. Dr. Guy Goodsell, district superintendent of the Portland district, dedicated this as the Junior Chapel on Sunday evening, March 28th, at which time the mortgage of the parsonage was also burned.

Much voluntary labor has gone into these two youth chapels by the skilled hands of Mr. Jacob Carlson, a trustee of this church.

Among the activities of Mr. Fedje's pastorate have been the reception of 153 persons into membership, 99 baptisms, 79 funerals and 32 weddings.

Perhaps the church never enjoyed a more harmonious and successful condition than at present.

The many and various activities of the Sunday schools, the young people's societies, the Ladies Aid Society with its years of sacrificial labor and devotion in helping to keep the ship of Zion on an even keel, the missionary society which through many years contributed to the enlightenment of unfortunates in many lands, and the host of loyal members and friends whose service, tithes and prayers helped to sustain the church, all these may only thus be mentioned.

According to this humble account thirty five Methodist Ministers have here labored and endeavored to help make Astoria a better and happier, because a more Christian community.

The real work of the ministry and the church may not easily be described on paper.

Its results live in the characters and the faiths of people.

It is to be regretted that the names and deeds of all the laymen and pastors of all denominations who have had a part in this work could not be enumerated and memorialized that their service be remembered.

By MR. & MRS. S. C. TURNER,
Members, Board of Trustees